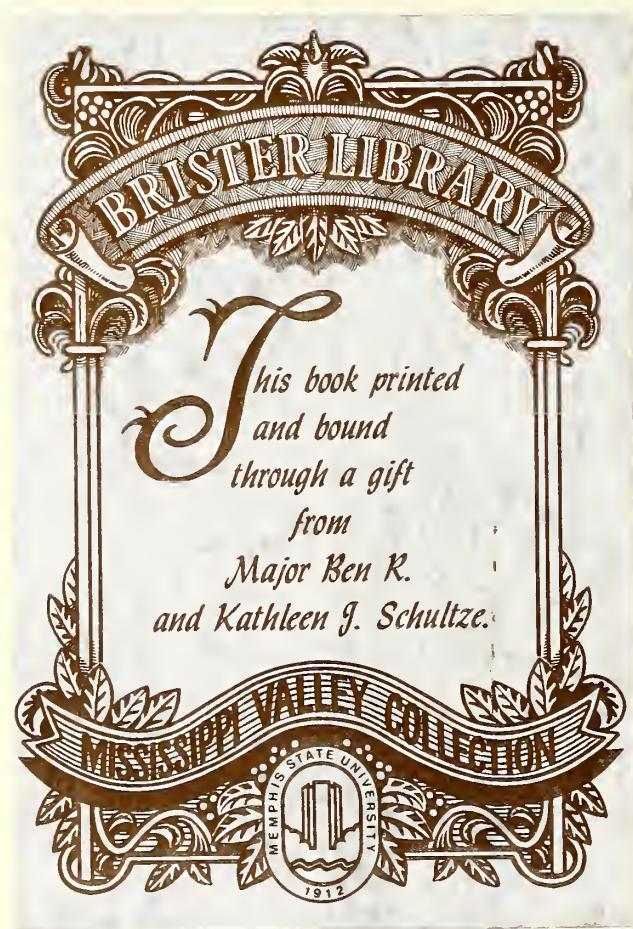


ORAL HISTORY OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
INTERVIEWS WITH
DR. JOHN IVEY

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - BRENDA P. MEIER
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY



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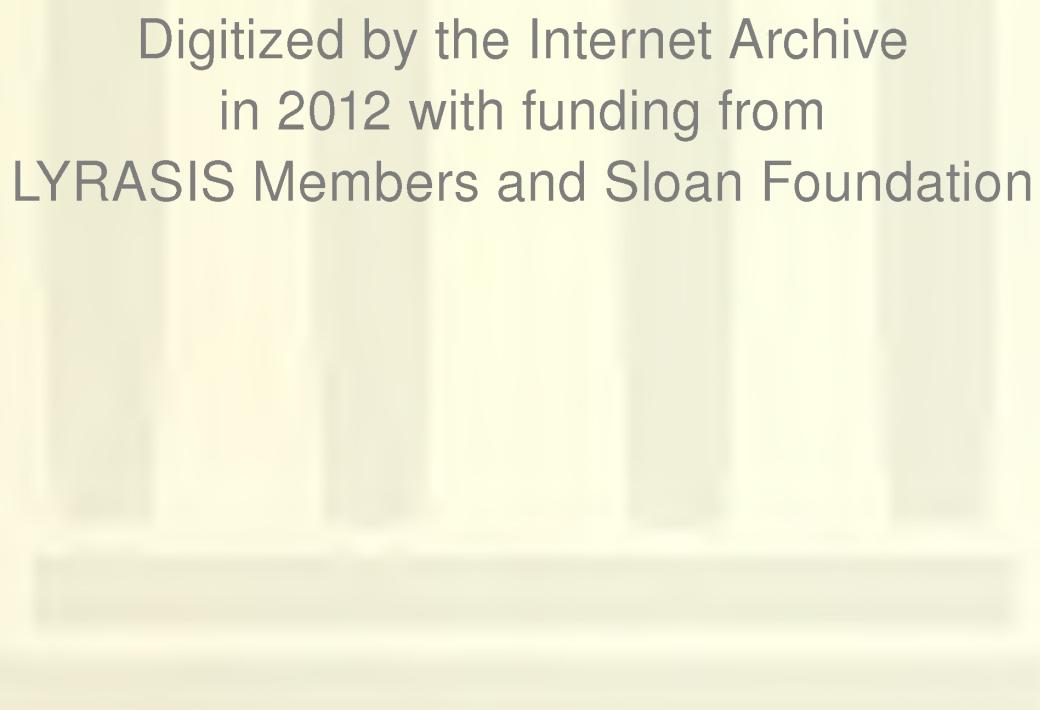
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INTERVIEW WITH DR. JOHN IVEY

MARCH 6, 1970

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD

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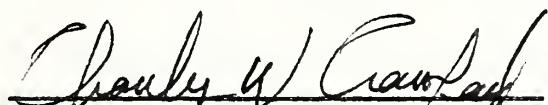
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by the said Archives, which also may assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

PLACE East Lansing, Mich.

DATE Mar. 5, 1970.


(Interviewee) JOHN W. IVEY



(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY." THE PLACE IS EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN. THE DATE IS MARCH 6, 1970, AND THE INTERVIEW IS WITH DR. JOHN IVEY, FORMERLY WITH THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY, NOW A RESEARCH PROFESSOR AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE, AND WAS TRANSCRIBED BY MRS. BRENDA P. MEIER.

CRAWFORD: I know this interview will be short, Dr. Ivey, but I suggest that we start with a little background before we get to your recollections of TVA and Knoxville. Will you sum up just a bit some information about where and when you were born and your education and experience before joining TVA?

IVEY: Well, I was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, January of 1919, and grew up in Alabama. I did my undergraduate work at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn and then went to North Carolina for a Ph.D., and worked in the Sociology Department at the Institute for Research in Social Science at North Carolina.

I went to the Southern Regional Education Board, and from there had a brief sojourn with the TVA in the hills of East Tennessee. Then from SREB to the New York University and then to the Michigan State University.

CRAWFORD: What was the nature of your work with the Southern Regional Education Board?

IVEY: I was Director of the organization, which covered 16 states and was supported by the 16 legislatures. We had on the Board of Directors the governor of each state, the state university president, the state superintendent of education and the president of the Negro land grant college.

This organization was charged with building a cooperative program of graduate education and research in the 16 states; also working with non-university agencies on problems of resource development.

CRAWFORD: How long did you hold this position?

IVEY: Nine years.

CRAWFORD: Where were you headquartered while you worked with the SREB?

IVEY: Atlanta.

CRAWFORD: Did you become familiar with TVA objectives and TVA personnel during that time?

IVEY: Well, actually before that time because in North Carolina my area of specialty was regional development.

CRAWFORD: Why did you decide to accept the position with TVA?

IVEY: The American Council on Education created a Committee on Southern Regional Studies and Education, the purpose of which was to develop instructional materials on regional resource development problems that could be used in the schools, so there was not too much of a jump from that interest into the TVA environs.

CRAWFORD: I think the objectives were very similar in that case. When did you first arrive in Knoxville for your TVA work?

IVEY: January 1, 1943.

CRAWFORD: You were familiar, of course, with conditions in the South at that time. What were your first impressions of the organization and degree of efficiency of TVA?

IVEY: Well, this was my first contact with a large organizational structure. I was favorably impressed with the personnel--their dedication and motivation and their high degree of accomplishment.

CRAWFORD: Where did your position fit into the organizational chart when you arrived in January of 1943?

IVEY: TVA made half of my time available to the American Council on Education's committee that I referred to. In the other half of my time, I was a member of the educational relations staff of the Personnel Department.

CRAWFORD: Who was Director of Personnel at that time?

IVEY: George Gant.

CRAWFORD: Were you acquainted with George Gant before you went to TVA?

IVEY: He was a member of the Committee on Southern Regional Studies, so I had been in touch with him maybe two years before. He was probably the one who invited me to TVA.

CRAWFORD: What did your duties consist of at the time you started work in 1943?

IVEY: Mostly reviewing the instructional materials that were available in the Tennessee Valley states for school and university use, and working with non-school agencies in developing conferences which would involve the state departments of public instruction and the universities, along with the departments within TVA like Forestry, City Planning, Agriculture, and so on.

CRAWFORD: What condition did you find in the Tennessee Valley area concerning material available for instruction?

IVEY: There was a lot of material, but very little was being used.

CRAWFORD: Did you see your problem as primarily developing the use of the material already there?

IVEY: I suppose the chief problem was the material was fragmented. Dr. Harcourt Morgan's concept of ecology in regional development was a unifying factor, against which we tried to relate fragmented materials on soil erosion, reforestation, public health, and so on.

CRAWFORD: Did you have a capable staff to assist you at the beginning?

IVEY: Well, I was the staff to begin with. I had easy access to other members of the TVA family, and we had money from the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board to carry out the enterprise.

CRAWFORD: With what other divisions of TVA did you work most often?

IVEY: With the regional planning group. Howard Menhenick, I believe, was in charge of that.

CRAWFORD: I believe he is retired in Atlanta now.

IVEY: He was at Georgia Tech.

CRAWFORD: I believe that he still is. I have not interviewed him

CRAWFORD: yet. I believe that's where he is.
(cont'd)

IVEY: Yes.

CRAWFORD: Did you travel considerably in this work or did you handle it from Knoxville?

IVEY: No, I covered the whole area pretty regularly. We used the device of a series of regional workshops which were held at Gatlinburg.

CRAWFORD: Did you have difficulty getting people to attend them?

IVEY: No.

CRAWFORD: How were the regions marked off? Did you follow state lines?

IVEY: Pretty much. The usual six-state area was the one we used. I think TVA was concerned at that time with what kind of memoranda of agreement should be executed between TVA and the state agencies on the theory that it ought to work through the state agencies on operational matters to the extent possible, rather than creating a parallel bureaucracy; so that you had the TVA in the power business, with their interests in agriculture and water and erosion and reforestation carried on by the state agencies.

CRAWFORD: Were you able to get effective activity out of the state agencies?

IVEY: There was a tremendous interest and willingness to cooperate.

CRAWFORD: Did it vary considerably from state to state, and in what states was it most successful?

IVEY: Well, it varied some from state to state. North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky were the most interested, I would say.

CRAWFORD: Did you find considerable background work already done when you started this?

IVEY: Not much. The TVA had an advisory panel on regional materials of instruction which was put into operation a couple of years before I joined the staff, and this function was largely carried on by the Committee on Southern Regional Studies of the American Council on Education after I joined the TVA staff.

CRAWFORD: Did you have assistance from the TVA technical library staff?

IVEY: All that was needed.

CRAWFORD: Who was in charge of the library at that time?

IVEY: Well, we worked through Tobie Rothrock I don't know whether she's still living or not.

CRAWFORD: Yes, sir. She is still living at a home in the south part of town on Kingston Pike. I interviewed her month before last.

IVEY: Well, she was the person we worked with primarily, or through, I should say.

CRAWFORD: She had started some sort of study into those needs earlier, I believe. What did you try to accomplish in your Gatlinburg meetings?

IVEY: Well, the main purpose was to set into motion a series of research translation units at different colleges and universities to translate things like Dr. Morgan's Common Mooring into materials that could be used in the elementary and secondary schools.

CRAWFORD: What was your understanding of Dr. Morgan's Common Mooring concept? How would you explain it?

IVEY: Well, that's pretty hard to capsule. I think, in a nutshell, it was an ecological concept that dealt with

IVEY: the unity of environment, you upset the equilibrium of
(Cont'd) the other elements and created problems such as health,
soil erosion and so on.

CRAWFORD: Did you consider the Tennessee Valley a good example of
the misuse of this common mooring in its erosion and
other problems of waste?

IVEY: Yes.

CRAWFORD: Do you think this concept was understood well by the
people you worked with?

IVEY: I can't answer that. I think that there was a silent
majority in the Tennessee Valley staff that understood
the basic concepts, but when it came to saying what do they mean for
the operation of the Department of Forestry or Agriculture or Public
Health, there was a gap in the relationship between the common mooring
and operation.

CRAWFORD: Did you find the educational institutions you worked
with were effective agencies for carrying out these ideas?

IVEY: I think considerable progress was made. It was spotty,
again, as I mentioned earlier. Probably the best center
that was created in the research translation area was the Alabama
Polytechnic Institute at Auburn--Dr. Paul Irvin, who is dead now.

CRAWFORD: Why do you have such success there? Was it the leadership or the interest of the institution?

IVEY: Mostly the leadership. We had one or two people that wanted to make a career out of this type of activity.

CRAWFORD: Had they started such collections before your program was developed?

IVEY: No.

CRAWFORD: Do you know how well that has been continued since you left TVA?

IVEY: No. Dr. Richard Weaver, who was at the University of North Carolina and at the State Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, created a part of this activity. He was made Director of Resource Use Education, which was a phrase we used rather than Dr. Harcourt Morgan's concept, so it tied together the conservation approach and the common mooring approach. He probably did more than anyone else to develop a state program which was anchored at Chapel Hill part of the time and at Raleigh part of the time.

CRAWFORD: You were already familiar with leaders in North Carolina, weren't you, from your experience there?

IVEY: Yes. Dr. Frank Graham was very important in this picture by encouragement, making resources available, while he was president of the university at Chapel Hill.

CRAWFORD: What other educational leaders in the region impressed you with their understanding of it at this time?

IVEY: Ralph Draughn, who was President of Auburn; G.D. Humphrey, who was President of Mississippi State; Maurice Seay, who was at the University of Kentucky; Edgar Morfit, who was at the University of Florida; O. C. Aderhold, who was then Dean of the College of Education at the University of Georgia, and later President, who has since died; Gordon Blackwell, who was the Director of the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina; Howard Odum, who was head of the Sociology Department--that would be the major people.

CRAWFORD: Did you perhaps study under Howard Odum or Rupert Vance at North Carolina?

IVEY: Yes, for my Ph.D. He was my major advisor--Odum was.

CRAWFORD: You were convinced, I suppose, of the need of development in the South after having studied under them?

IVEY: Yes.

CRAWFORD: Did you know of any agency in the South doing more for development of the southeastern area than TVA at this time?

IVEY: Soil Conservation Service was active, but TVA had more trust and more leadership, and more competent people, I think, than any other government agency.

CRAWFORD: On reflection, what do you think about the quality of the personnel you saw at TVA? Were you generally well impressed with them?

IVEY: As I look back on it now, the personnel like Gordon Clapp, Art Jandry, George Gant, Harry Case, Dick Niehoff, and so on--to mention only a few--did the best job of taking a philosophy of environment and translating it into workable programs, and then making the program work, I'd say, very highly.

CRAWFORD: You were familiar with the southeastern region before TVA, during its developmental phase, and of course, after. Do you feel that there is any doubt about it's success in carrying out the original aims?

IVEY: No. I think it was and has been quite successful.

CRAWFORD: In what areas did you notice most impressive change?

IVEY: Well, of course, the obvious impression was of the tremendous development of the hydro-electric system, which was later supplemented in a large way with coal, steam-power plants. The effect that this had on the growth of small towns in rural areas through the rural cooperative program was very evident.

I believe that TVA was responsible, to a large extent, for the development of tourism, which is a major industry as I understand it, to the area now. It was very primitive in 1934 and '35. but hotels and restaurants and novelty shops and so on have grown until it's more sophisticated now than it was then.

CRAWFORD: When did you leave TVA, Dr. Ivey?

IVEY: In the spring of 1944.

CRAWFORD: Did you feel you had carried out your original purposes in any significant degree by that time with TVA?

IVEY: Well, the Committee on Southern Regional Studies in Education, which was created before I went to TVA and which I served part-time with in TVA, was continued after I left. I went back to the University of North Carolina, to be on the faculty there for four years, so it wasn't a feeling of leaving one job and going to another, but more or less carrying on that activity in two different geographic locations.

CRAWFORD: Thank you, sir.



